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From: Marc Shargel [<mailto:mlpa@livingseaimages.com>]
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2005 12:49 AM
To: ccrsgcomments@resources.ca.gov
Subject: Comment on Evaluation Matrix for Existing MPAs

Dear I-Team Staff,

Just returning from a much-needed vacation with family. I know we'll all need a long one when the work of the CCRSG is completed. Though I realize you'd hoped to gather all comments on the Evaluation Matrix a couple days ago, I wanted to pass on a couple thoughts. I hope you'll be able to consider them for the revision. In respect for your time, I'll be brief.

I first want to express my endorsement of the letter you received from my colleague John Wolfe. His comments did indeed capture many of my concerns, and did so in greater detail and with more mathematical rigor than I'd have been able to do even if I'd not been on vacation!

I am very grateful to John for his effort in conveying diver concerns and values. Without devaluing other comments he made by failing to restate them, I want to mention the importance of Bull Kelp vs. Giant Kelp as distinct habitat types, and larval settling and maturation areas ("nurseries") as important to protect.

I want to underscore and amplify a couple of points.

Goal 1, Obj 4

Protection of trophic structure and food webs is one of the things MPAs, and especially marine reserves, do best. The most significant question we can ask in determining whether an MPA meets this objective is: "Is the MPA no-take?" The draft matrix appropriately uses this simple criterion for Objective 5, and should for Obj 4 as well, I believe.

Goal 3, Obj 1

Given the final language passed for this objective and the differences with the draft matrix's anticipated wording, I believe additional metrics are in order. The simplest is: "Does the MPA include (a) traditional non-consumptive use area(s)?" Ideally we'd be able to measure the proportion of non-consumptive uses (diving, kayaking, surfing, wildlife viewing, etc) that take place there. Given the much-discussed lack of hard data in this area, the best available information is probably obtained by starting with mapped use pattern information. However, I urge you to be SURE to reality-check that data by confirming it with the relevant expert(s) on those usages on the RSG.

Goal 3, Obj 4

Add to John Wolfe's careful analysis technique the same information used for Objective 1. Also add recreational fishing use and expert input, as this Objective was broadened to be sure to protect or enhance rec fishing experience. So the total success of an MPA against this objective is the score derived by John Wolfe's formula, multiplied by the relative popularity of the site for each type of recreation.

Finally I want to underscore John Wolfe's comments about Goal 4. For Objective 1, evaluate fish nursery areas (i.e. larval settlement and grow-out areas) for the list of special habitats.

Objective 2 must be evaluated in some meaningful way lest the work of this RSG be completely redone in just a few years based on an as-yet unknown analysis of contribution to a network. John's formula provides a remarkably measurable and rigorous way to do this. Unless staff can improve on it, I urge you to adopt it.

In closing, let me restate my appreciation for the work I know you on the staff are doing on this document and on many other fronts. Keep up the fine work! Again, I hope the brevity of these comments allows you to get that work done quickly.

Best wishes, and I look forward to another productive session in October.

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Marc Shargel,
Sea Life Photographer
Chair, The Coalition of Organizations for Ocean Life Alternate Member, MLPA Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group

I've created this email address specifically to accept correspondence on marine reserves, MLPA, and related issues. Please send comments and questions to:
MLPA@LivingSeaimages.com

For more information on the creation of marine reserves along the Central Coast, see:

<http://www.CaliforniaMarineReserves.org>